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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for filtering electronic mail messages on a client computer in a distributed computer network, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

receiving an electronic mail message at the client computer;

determining whether an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message;

responsive to a determination that an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message, automatically displaying content of the electronic mail message in a forefront position in the user interface on the client computer; and

displaying the content of the electronic mail message until actions specified in the electronic mail message are performed.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the content from the electronic mail message is displayed in a popup window in the client computer.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises the entire electronic mail message.

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4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises a portion of the electronic mail message.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the content of the electronic mail message is automatically displayed to a recipient on the client computer if a sender of the electronic mail message has authority to issue an interrupt electronic mail message to the recipient.

6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the authority is based on an external source.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the external source is a corporate directory.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step is performed by analyzing a message field within the message.

9.   A data processing system for filtering electronic mail messages on a client computer in a distributed computer network, the system comprising:

        receiving means for receiving an electronic mail message at the client computer;

        determining means for determining whether an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message;

        first displaying means for automatically displaying content of the electronic mail message in a forefront

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position in the user interface on the client computer in response to a determination that an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message; and

second displaying means for displaying the content of the electronic mail message until actions specified in the electronic mail message are performed.

10. The data processing system of claim 9, wherein the content from the electronic mail message is displayed in a popup window in the client computer.

11. The data processing system of claim 9, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises the entire electronic mail message.

12. The data processing system of claim 9, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises a portion of the electronic mail message.

13. The data processing system of claim 9, wherein the content of the electronic mail message is automatically displayed to a recipient on the client computer if a sender of the electronic mail message has authority to issue an interrupt electronic mail message to the recipient.

14. The data processing system of claim 13, wherein the authority is based on an external source.

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15.   The data processing system of claim 14, wherein the external source is a corporate directory.

16.   The data processing system of claim 9, wherein the determining step is performed by analyzing a message field within the message.

17.   A computer program product in a computer readable medium for filtering electronic mail messages on a client computer in a distributed computer network, the method comprising the computer implemented steps of:

first instructions for receiving an electronic mail message at the client computer;

second instructions for determining whether an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message;

third instructions for automatically displaying content of the electronic mail message in a forefront position in the user interface on the client computer in response to a determination that an interrupt indicia is associated with the electronic mail message; and

fourth instructions for displaying the content of the electronic mail message until actions specified in the electronic mail message are performed.

18.   The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the content from the electronic mail message is displayed in a popup window in the client computer.

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19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises the entire electronic mail message.

20. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the content displayed on the client computer comprises a portion of the electronic mail message.

21. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the content of the electronic mail message is automatically displayed to a recipient on the client computer if a sender of the electronic mail message has authority to issue an interrupt electronic mail message to the recipient.

22. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the authority is based on an external source.

23. The computer program product of claim 22, wherein the external source is a corporate directory.

24. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the determining step is performed by analyzing a message field within the message.